

VZCZCXYZ0000  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHUL #0059/01 0120912  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 120912Z JAN 09  
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2890  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 5157  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 9172  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 5263  
RUACAAA/COMUSKOREA INTEL SEOUL KOR PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/COMUSKOREA J5 SEOUL KOR PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/COMUSFK SEOUL KOR PRIORITY  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

Monday, 12 January 2009, 09:12  
C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 000059

SIPDIS  
EO 12958 DECL: 01/12/2019  
TAGS PGOV, PREL, KS, KN  
SUBJECT: ROK'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD THE NEIGHBORS: NORTH  
KOREA, JAPAN, CHINA AND RUSSIA  
REF: A. TOKYO 3114 (TRILATERAL POLICY PLANNING) B. SECDEF DTG261447ZNOV08 (DEFENSE TRILATERAL TALKS) C. TOKYO 3416 (ROK-PRC-JAPAN TRILATS) I  
Classified By: POL M/C Joseph Y. Yun. Reasons 1.4(b/d)  
1. (C) Summary: As a presidential candidate, Lee Myoung-bak called for a "creative reconstruction" of Korea's foreign policy. In his February

-----  
DPRK  
-----

12. (C) In a February 2007 speech that has widely come to be known as the "MB Doctrine," presidential candidate Lee Myung-bank firmed up his vi  
13. (C) The response from Pyongyang was predictably swift and severe. Using threatening language not heard since the Kim Young-sam days, North  
14. (C) With both sides dug in, the outlook for any quick improvement in inter-Korean relations is slim to none. Much more likely is the contin

-----  
Japan  
-----

15. (C) President Lee has made concerted efforts to improve relations with Tokyo, which were significantly strained during the Roh Moo-hyun era  
16. (C) So far, Lee's efforts have yielded some success, although Blue House officials would argue that results would have been far better had

-----  
China  
-----

17. (C) President Lee has openly courted the Chinese, and he has chalked up some noteworthy successes. Less than one year into his term, Lee ha  
18. (C) During Lee's first visit to Beijing, he and Hu issued a joint statement which upgraded the Korea-China relationship to a "strategic coc  
19. (C) Despite the name, Koreans have found substantive strategic discussions with the Chinese frustratingly difficult. For example, Lee, unli

-----  
Russia  
-----

10. (C) Lee has largely continued the trend of his predecessors in upgrading economic ties with Russia. ROK-Russia economic ties have grown mc  
11. (C) On his state visit, Lee also signed an agreement to upgrade the ROK-Russia relationship to a "Strategic Cooperative Partnership", the

-----  
Comment  
-----

12. (C) During a year in which President Lee faced considerable difficulty advancing his domestic agenda, his foreign policy efforts, if not w